

**DETERMINATION AND FINDINGS
FOR A
SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT**

CONTRACT NO: CW85241
CAPTION: Customer Service Center
PROPOSED CONTRACTOR: Cerida Investment Corp dba AnswerNet (AnswerNet)
PROGRAM AGENCY: Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF)

FINDINGS

1. AUTHORIZATION:

D.C. Official Code §2-354.04, 27 DCMR Sections 1304, 1700, and 1701

2. MINIMUM NEED:

Due to the COVID-19 emergency, there is a compelling urgency to maintain and enhance the existing CSC to meet the needs of DC residents. The Government of the District of Columbia, on behalf of the Department of Health Care Finance (“the District”), has an urgent need for Cerida Investment Corp dba AnswerNet to continue to provide a tier one customer service center (CSC). The CSC is the initial point of contact for tier one inquiries regarding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF), District of Columbia Mobile Application and technical support inquiries on behalf of District of Columbia Access System (DCAS). Without the CSC, the ability for the District to continue to process applicant benefits in a timely and efficient manner would be greatly reduced, resulting in a delay of benefits to District residents.

3. ESTIMATED REASONABLE PRICE:

The estimated cost for this service is \$3,784,800.00. The period of performance is from the date of award through one year thereafter.

4. FACTS WHICH JUSTIFY SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT:

The following facts justify the Sole Source Procurement:

- A. As a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency, an emergency competitive procurement was completed and AnswerNet was awarded a contract to provide a tier one CSC. The tier one CSC provided information and assistance to District residents using the District of Columbia Mobile Application. The CSC support is still needed to provide continued assistance to District residents and will remain the point of contact for tier one inquiries regarding SNAP and TANF benefits. The CSC will provide residents with support navigating the DC Mobile Application and will respond to inquiries for technical support received by telephone, chat, and email, for DCAS programs.

B. The CSC increases the District's capabilities and support activities, adding flexibilities to improve customer service, reduce applicant and participant wait times, decrease the workload on agency employees, and allows for better coordination across multiple human service programs. The CSC expanded activities will include:

- Providing general information regarding requests for assistance, appeals, complaints, language line, etc.;
- Providing locations and referrals for health and human services support programs;
- Responding to requests for blank applications; and
- Providing the following read-only information from the system: case status, application status, receipt of documentation, benefit amount and date, and case denial reason.

C. District residents have the capability to apply for SNAP and TANF benefits through an easy to use and intuitive mobile application for Android and Apple devices. The mobile application speeds entry of their benefit applications as the application dynamically displays questions relevant to their situation and need, as well as uploads verification documents easily. DC residents are able to use the mobile application in Spanish and Amharic. DC residents obtain help within the mobile application and through e-mail, in addition to existing methods of support, which is provided by the CSC. The mobile application has expanded access to the benefit application process for DC residents that may not have had the ability to apply via the traditional in person or paper application process. The CSC enhances that process by assisting those residents having trouble with the mobile application to quickly apply for benefits.

D. The DC mobile application supports caseworkers by:

- Ensuring resident applications have more detailed information which limits call backs;
- Seamless integration between Document Imaging Management System (DIMS) and Pathway Operating System (PathOS);
- Automated upload of documents to DIMS;
- Automated creation of person records for new customers; and
- Pre-populated applications in DCAS that make the application intake process easier.

The CSC supports the ability of caseworkers to process benefit applications by assisting DC residents with the DC mobile application. The assistance provided by the CSC reduces the number of questions received by caseworkers and increases the information available to them thereby increasing the efficiency of processing benefits.

B. AnswerNet's services must be used for the contract services referenced above to minimize any disruption in agency operation and to increase the efficiency of the benefit application process. Without the CSC, the ability for the District to process benefits quickly would be reduced.

D. Due to time and cost constraints, it is not feasible to conduct a competitive procurement, award a contract and transition services prior to the expiration date of

the current emergency contract. The sole source award ensures continuation of service without disruption to DC residents during the COVID-19 public health emergency. To avoid disruption of this essential service the District has determined it is in the best interest to enter into a Sole Source Contract with AnswerNet to continue to provide a tier one CSC. The sole source contract for these services is proposed for a one (1) year base period, with four (4) one-year option periods. All mandatory terms and conditions shall be enforced and remain the same.

- E. The anticipated costs to the District are considered fair and reasonable.
- F. A market survey was not conducted for this sole source procurement because it was determined to be in the best interest of the District to utilize the incumbent vendor due to the nature of the services provided to vulnerable District residents.
- G. Public Notice of OCP's intent to award a sole source contract was posted to OCP's website for ten (10) calendar days pursuant to the requirements of D.C. Official Code 2-354.04. The posting was submitted to OCP's website on September 11, 2020 for ten (10) calendar day with no responses.
- H. AnswerNet has performed the required services satisfactorily since it was awarded the emergency contract.

5. CERTIFICATION BY AGENCY HEAD:

I hereby certify that the above findings are true, correct and complete.

Date

Wayne Turnage
Director, DHCF

6. CERTIFICATION BY CONTRACTING OFFICER:

I have reviewed the above findings and certify that they are sufficient to justify the use of the sole source method of procurement under the cited authority. I certify that the notice of intent to award a sole source contract was published in accordance with 27 DCMR 1304. I recommend that the Chief Procurement Officer approve the use of the sole source procurement method for this proposed contract.

Date

Lydia S. Gray
Contracting Officer

7. CERTIFICATION BY CHIEF CONTRACTING OFFICER:

I hereby certify that the above findings are true, correct and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Date

Wil Giles
Chief Contracting Officer

DETERMINATION

Based on the above findings and in accordance with the cited authority, I hereby determine that it is not feasible or practical to invoke the competitive solicitation process under either Section 402 or 403 of the District of Columbia Procurement Practices Reform Act of 2010 (D.C. Law 18-371; D.C. Official Code § 2-354.02 or 2-354.03). Accordingly, I determine that the District is justified in using the sole source method of procurement.

Date

George A. Schutter III
Chief Procurement Officer